



One of the Nation’s Ideal Bird Watching Places



Beaver Marsh
NPS Photo

Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) has long been recognized by birdwatchers and national organizations, like Audubon Society, as an important bird watching area. The great variety of habitats in the park make it possible to observe over 160 different kinds of birds each year. Bird watching continues to be one of the park's most popular activities.

Observing the interesting behavior of something as small as the ruby-throated hummingbird or large as a great blue heron may hold a special appeal to some. To others it may be seeing so many different kinds of birds in one location. Still others may find experiencing something totally new for the first time extremely rewarding.

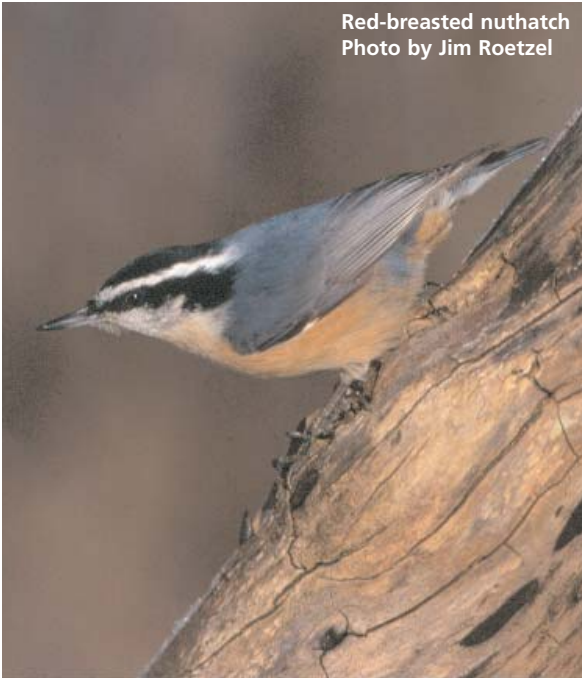
So grab a field guide and a pair of binoculars, and see what experiences await your discovery. Use this bulletin as guide to find the best bird watching locations in CVNP. It has been specifically organized for this purpose. Each of the bird watching locations have sub-captions stating the habitat, detailed descriptions for the types of birds, when they are best seen, and bird watching opportunities offered at CVNP.

Ledges *Hemlock and Mixed Ravine Forest*

The cool, moist hemlock and yellow birch forests along the towering sandstone ledges, provide us an opportunity to watch birds in area more typical of the mixed evergreen forests of Canada. The Ledges are a micro-environment, a small area that creates its own environment. As water slowly flows through the sandstone, it provides moisture and keeps this place cooler

during the summer than the surrounding areas, providing a specialized bird habitat. Solitary vireo, winter wren, hermit thrush, and black-throated green warbler are frequently observed during the late spring, when bird watching is best at the Ritchie Ledges in the Virginia Kendall area of the park.

Horseshoe Pond *Mixed Evergreen and Fields*



Red-breasted nuthatch
Photo by Jim Roetzel

A walk along the Tree Farm Trail takes us through an abandoned tree farm, rich with mixed conifer trees, providing great habitat to wintering birds. This is an especially good area to look for red-breasted nuthatches and golden-crowned kinglets during the months of late October through early March. The large open areas surrounding the evergreen forests are excellent places to look for small flocks of eastern bluebirds, most any time of the year.



Wood ducks
Photo by Jim Roetzel

Beaver Marsh
Mixed Wetland

This is a good place to visit during the waterfowl migrations during March and November. Wetlands provide essential feeding and resting places to migrating birds. Less than 10 percent of the original wetlands are remaining in Ohio.

A walk along the beaver wetland boardwalk often provides great bird watching opportunities, especially during summer, when it possible to see birds at close range and in their peak breeding plumage. During this season, watch for wood ducks as they travel in family units, look for cedar waxwings as they capture insects in mid-air, and listen for an insect-like call of the marsh wren.

The Beaver Marsh is accessible from the Towpath Trail. Riverview Road parking areas at Ira Trailhead and Hunt Farm are closest to the area.

Pinery Narrows and Bath Road
Floodplain and Mixed Swamp

From February until July, great blue herons nest in treetop colonies, called heronries. Watching the four-foot herons with their seven-foot wingspans is most impressive during the breeding season, when the birds are at peak plumage and performing their intricate courtship displays.

It is best to visit the Pinery Narrows Heronry in the early spring before the views become obscured by leafy vegetation. It is approximately ¼ mile north of Station Road Bridge along the Towpath Trail. On the west (river) side watch for a small clearing just before the bridle trail junction and then look across the river for the heronry. Listen for the birds.

The Bath Road Heronry can be observed throughout the entire breeding season from a pullout along Bath Road.

Programs and Opportunities

Cuyahoga Valley National Park offers programs and opportunities to a wide range of birdwatchers, ranging from the beginner to the experienced. Take a conducted birdwalk in a prime birdwatching area to join others with a similar interest and develop your skills in a friendly setting. To become more involved attend a more specialized program, a workshop, or consider volunteering by participating on an annual bird census, listed in the park schedule of events. Eventually, you may wish to pursue additional opportunities and experiences that will lead to preservation efforts for ensuring the future of sensitive bird populations.



CVNP protects 33,000 acres along the Cuyahoga River between Cleveland and Akron. Managed by the National Park Service, CVNP combines cultural, historical, recreational, and natural activities in one setting. Visitors can hike, bike, birdwatch, golf, fish, ski, ride Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, explore the history of the Ohio & Erie Canal on a 20-mile section of the Towpath Trail, and attend national park ranger-guided programs, concerts, art exhibits, and more. For more information, call (216) 524-1497 or (800) 445-9667 or visit www.nps.gov/cuva or www.dayinthevalley.com.



**Cuyahoga Valley
National Park**

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